

355. Expiation for taking He.
The most primitive notion we can find
as to taking life is that it is wrong
to kill any living thing except as a sacri-
fice to some superior power.
This dread of destroying life, as if
it was the
assumption of a divine prerogative
to do so, gives a background for ail the
usages with regard to sacrifice
and food. " In old Israel all
slaughter was
sacrifice, and a man could never
eat beef or mutton except as a
religious
act." Amongst the Arabs, " even
in modern times, when a sheep or
camel
is slain in honor of a guest, the
good old custom is that the host
keeps open
house for all his neighbors."¹ In
modern Hindostan food which is
ordinarily
tabooed may be eaten if it has
been killed in offering to a god.
Therefore
an image of the god is set up in
the butcher's shop. All the
animals are
slaughtered nominally as an
offering to it This raises the
taboo, and the
meat is bought and eaten without
scruple.² Thus it is that the
taboo on
cannibalism may be raised by
religion, or that cannibalism may
be made a
duty by religion. Amongst the
ancient Semites some animals
were under a
food taboo for a reason which has
two aspects at the same time :
they were
both offensive (ritually unclean)
and sacred. What is holy and
what is
loathsome are in like manner set
aside. The Jews said that the
Holy Scrip-
tures rendered him who handled
them unclean. Holy and unclean
have a
common element opposed to
profane. In the case of both
there is devotion
or consecration to a higher power.
If it is a good power, the thing is
holy;
if a bad power, it is unclean. He
who touches either falls under a

taboo,
 and needs purification.⁸ The
 tabooed things could only be eaten
 sacrificially
 and sacramentally, i.e. as
 disgusting and unusual they had
 greater sacrificial
 force.⁴ This idea is to be traced in
 all ascetic usages, and in many
 mediaeval
 developments of religious usages
 which introduced repulsive
 elements, to
 heighten the self-discipline of
 conformity. In the Caroline
 Islands turtles
 are sacred to the gods and are
 eaten only in illness or as
 sacrifices.^

356. Philosophy of
 cannibalism. If cannibalism
 began in the
 interest of the food supply,
 especially of meat, the wide
 rami-
 fications of its relations are
 easily understood. While
 men were
 unable to cope with the great
 beasts cannibalism was a
 leading
 feature of social life, around
 which a great cluster of
 interests
 centered. Ideas were
 cultivated by it, and it
 became regulative
 and directive as to what
 ought to be done. The
 sentiments of
 kinship made it seem right
 and true that the nearest
 relatives

¹ W. R. Smith, *Relig. of Semites*,
 142, 283.

² Wilkins, *Mod. Hinduism*, 168.

³ Bousset, *Relig. des Judenthums*,
 124.

* W. R. Smith, *Relig. of Semites*,
 290; Isaiah Ixv. 4; Ixvi. 3, 17 ; swine,
 dog,
 and mouse. *

⁶ Kubary, *Karolinen Archipel*, 168.